IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:	)
	) Group Art Unit: 2166
Mike SOUMOKIL et al.	)
	) Examiner: Usmaan SAEED
Application No.: 10/770,423	)
	) Confirmation No.: 1939
Filed: February 4, 2004	)
	)
For: ELECTRONIC DATA RECORD OF	)
AN INVOICE, THE RECORD	)
HAVING A DUNNING KEY	)

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Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 41.37

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 41.37 and in support of the Notice of Appeal filed

January 21, 2010, the period for filing an Appeal Brief extending through March 21,

2010, Appellants present this Appeal Brief and enclose a fee of $540.00 under

37 C.F.R. § 41.20(b)(2).

This Appeal responds to the Final Office Action mailed November 24, 2009,

which finally rejected claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29.

If any additional fees are required, Appellants request that the required fees be

charged to Deposit Account 06-0916.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. **Real Party in Interest**

The real party in interest is SAP AG, the assignee of record.

II.   Related Appeals and Interferences

There are currently no other appeals or interferences, of which Appellants, Appellants' legal representative, or assignee are aware, that will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

III.   <u>Status of Claims</u>

Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 are rejected.

Claims 2-5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 21, 23, 26, and 27 are canceled.

Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 are being appealed.

IV. Status of Amendments

No amendments have been filed after the Final Office Action.

V.   Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

A.   Independent Claim 1

The subject matter set forth in independent claim 1 relates to a computer readable storage medium for storing an electronic data record of an invoice. Paras. 008, 032, 034, and 037; and Fig. 1, refs. 107, 109, and 112. The electronic data record comprises a state data field corresponding to the invoice. Para. 034; and Fig. 1, ref. 109. The state data field includes an identification of a current state of a processing of the invoice. Para. 034; and Fig. 1, ref. 109. The current state is assigned by a user through a dialogue displayed on a display device. Paras. 006, 025, 030, 034, and 035; and Fig. 1, refs. 103, 104, and 115. The state data field further includes a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states. Paras. 019 and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 202. The state data field further includes a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer. Paras. 020 and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 205. The instructions comprise a workflow automatically initiated by the computer. Paras. 028 and 029; and Fig. 2, ref. 205. The state data field further includes a third link to an event table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice. Paras. 021, 030, and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 203. The state data field further includes a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding proposed actions for

changing the corresponding states. Paras. 021, 024, and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 204. The

electronic record further comprises a comment data field corresponding to the invoice.

Para. 022; and Fig. 2, ref. 201. The comment data field comprises comments entered

by the user through the dialogue. Paras. 022, 023, and 034; and Fig. 1, refs. 103, 104,

and 115.

B.   Independent Claim 8

The subject matter set forth in independent claim 8 relates to a computer-

implemented method for processing an electronic data record of an invoice. Para. 034;

and Fig. 1, ref. 109. The method comprises displaying a dialogue on a display device

for enabling a user to assign a current state of a processing of the invoice. Paras. 006,

025, 030, 034, and 035; and Fig. 1, ref. 103, 104, and 115. The method further

comprises storing, using a processor, an identification of the current state of the invoice

in a state data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record. Paras.

032, and 034; and Fig. 1, refs. 105 and 109. The state data field includes a first link to a

description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice

during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of

possible states. Paras. 019 and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 202. The state data field further

includes a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the

plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a

computer. Paras. 020 and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 205. The instructions comprise a

workflow automatically initiated by the computer. Paras. 028 and 029; and Fig. 2, ref.

205. The state data field further includes a third link to an event table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice. Paras. 021, 030, and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 203. The state data field further includes a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding proposed actions for changing the corresponding states. Paras. 021, 024, and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 204. Comments entered by the user through the dialogue are stored in a comment data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record. Paras. 022, 023, and 034; Fig. 1, refs. 103, 104, and 115; and Fig. 2, ref. 201.

C.   Independent Claim 14

The subject matter set forth in independent claim 14 relates to a computer system for processing an electronic data record of an invoice. Paras. 008 and 034; and Fig. 1, refs. 102 and 109. The computer system comprises memory including program instructions. Paras. 032, 034, 035, and 037; and Fig. 1, refs. 106, 107, 110, 111, and 112. The computer system further comprises input means for entering data. Para. 034; and Fig. 1, refs. 103, 104, and 115. The computer system further comprises storage means for storing data. Paras. 008, 032, 034, and 037; and Fig. 1, refs. 107 and 112. The computer system further comprises a processor responsive to the program instructions for displaying a dialogue for enabling a user to assign a current state of a processing of the invoice. Paras. 006, 025, 030, 034, and 035; and Fig. 1, refs. 103, 104, and 115. The computer system further comprises program instructions for storing an identification of the current state of the invoice in a state data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record. Paras. 032 and 034; and Fig. 1, refs. 105 and

109. The state data field includes a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states. Paras. 019 and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 202. The state data field further includes a second link to an instructions table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by the computer system. Paras. 020 and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 205. The instructions comprise a workflow automatically initiated by the computer system. Paras. 028 and 029; and Fig. 2, ref. 205. The state data field further includes a third link to an event table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice. Paras. 021, 030, and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 203. The state data field further includes a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding proposed actions for changing the corresponding states. Paras. 021, 024, and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 204. The computer system further comprises program instructions for storing comments entered by the user through the dialogue in a comment data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record. Paras. 022, 023, and 034; Fig. 1, refs. 103, 104, and 115; and Fig. 2, ref. 201.

D. Independent Claim 20

The subject matter set forth in independent claim 20 relates to a computer-readable storage medium comprising instructions for processing an electronic data record of an invoice. Paras. 008, 032, 034, and 037; and Fig. 1, refs. 107, 109, and

112. The computer-readable storage medium comprises instructions for displaying a dialogue on a display device for enabling a user to assign a current state of a processing of the invoice. Paras. 006, 025, 030, 034, and 035; and Fig. 1, refs. 103, 104, and 115. The computer-readable storage medium further comprises instructions for storing, using a processor, an identification of the current state of the invoice in a state data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record. Paras. 032 and 034; and Fig. 1, refs. 105 and 109. The state data field includes a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of possible states. Paras. 019 and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 202. The state data field further includes a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer. Paras. 020 and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 205. The instructions comprise a workflow automatically initiated by the computer. Paras. 028 and 029; and Fig. 2, ref. 205. The state data field further includes a third link to an event table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice. Paras. 021, 030, and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 203. The state data field further includes a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding proposed actions for changing the corresponding states. Paras. 021, 024, and 036; and Fig. 2, ref. 204. The computer-readable storage medium further comprises instructions for storing comments entered by the user through the dialogue in a comment data field corresponding to the

invoice in the electronic data record. Paras. 022, 023, and 034; Fig. 1, refs. 103, 104,

and 115; and Fig. 2, ref. 201.

VI. Grounds of Rejection to Be Reviewed on Appeal

Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2003/0004874 to Ludwig et al. ("*Ludwig*") in view of U. S. Publication No. 2002/0032692 to Suzuki et al. ("*Suzuki*").

VII.   Argument

Appellants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16,

18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Ludwig in view of *Suzuki*. A *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established.

"The key to supporting any rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 is the clear articulation

of the reason(s) why the claimed invention would have been obvious." M.P.E.P.

§ 2141(III).

> [T]he framework for objective analysis for determining obviousness under
> 35 U.S.C. 103 is stated in Graham v. John Deere Co., 383 U.S. 1, 148
> USPQ 459 (1966). . . . The factual inquiries . . . are as follows:
> (A) [Determining the scope and content of the prior art;]
> (B) Ascertaining the differences between the claimed invention and the
> prior art; and
> (C) Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.

M.P.E.P. § 2141(II). "Office personnel must explain why the difference(s) between the

prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in

the art." M.P.E.P. § 2141(III).

A.   Prior Art Fails to Teach or Suggest the Instruction Table

Independent claim 1 recites, among other things, "an instruction table comprising

the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions

automatically executed by a computer."

The Examiner acknowledges that "Ludwig . . . does not explicitly disclose[] . . . an

instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and

corresponding instructions automatically executable by the computer." Final Office

-14-

Action, at 6. However, the Examiner alleges that *Suzuki* discloses the claimed "instruction table." Final Office Action, at 6. This is incorrect.

Suzuki discloses "a state name," "a source state name," and "a destination state name." *Suzuki*, paras. 0071, 0073, 0080. Even assuming that the state names in *Suzuki* could correspond to the claimed "identifications of the plurality of possible states," which Appellants do not concede, *Suzuki* still fails to disclose or suggest a table including the plurality of possible state names and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer.

The Examiner cites paragraphs 0019, 0020, 0064, 0073, 0145, and 0150 of *Suzuki* as disclosing the claimed "instruction table." Final Office Action, at 6. This is incorrect. *Suzuki* discloses "a state definition table 210 for storing definitions of possible states . . . ; [and] a transition definition table 211 for storing definitions of possible transitions between states." *Suzuki*, para. 0064. However, neither these tables nor any other tables in *Suzuki* stores instructions automatically executed by a computer in correspondence with the stored possible states.

Therefore, *Ludwig* and *Suzuki* fail to teach or suggest at least "an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding instructions automatically executed by a computer," as recited in claim 1.

B.   Prior Art Fails to Teach or Suggest the Event Table

Independent claim 1 recites, among other things, "an event table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice."

-15-

The Examiner cites paragraph 0104 of *Ludwig* as teaching the events table. Final Office Action, at 4. This is incorrect.

Paragraph 0104 of *Ludwig* discloses that "the system may generate an automatic e-mail and send it to the selected list of biller system users" "[a]ny time one of these specific events occurs," "[f]or example, . . . invoices loaded successfully, . . . invoice adjusted, payment authorized, payment canceled, payment completed," etc. Although *Ludwig* discloses several events that can occur, *Ludwig* still fails to teach or suggest storing these events in an events table in correspondence with a plurality of possible states of the invoice. Therefore, *Ludwig* fails to teach or suggest "an event table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice," as recited in claim 1.

Furthermore, even assuming that *Suzuki* discloses "events which can occur during the processing of the invoice," which Appellants do not concede, *Suzuki* still fails to teach or suggest any table that stores "the identifications of the plurality of possible states" and the events in correspondence with each other.

Therefore, *Ludwig* and *Suzuki* fail to teach or suggest "an event table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states and corresponding events which can occur during the processing of the invoice," as recited in claim 1.

C. **Prior Art Fails to Teach or Suggest the Four Tables Including Identifications of Possible States**

Independent claim 1 recites, among other things, "a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice[,] . . . an instructions table

comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states of the invoice[,] . . . an event table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states of the invoice [,] . . . and . . . a proposal table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states of the invoice." Therefore, each of the four tables "compris[es] the identifications of the plurality of possible states."

Ludwig discloses statuses of invoices including "paid invoices, adjusted invoices, unpaid invoices, [and] paid through another source." *Ludwig*, para. 0080. However, *Ludwig* fails to teach or suggest four tables each storing all of these possible statuses.

Moreover, the Examiner inaccurately quotes claim 1 in the Final Office Action, such that claimed recitations regarding "the plurality of possible states" being included in the "event table" and the "proposal table" is omitted. Final Office Action, at 4. Therefore, the Examiner failed to point out which portions of *Ludwig* or *Suzuki* allegedly disclose such features.

Ludwig further discloses that "the invoice history page . . . display[s] a full status history for the selected invoice." *Ludwig*, para. 0092. However, the invoice history page of *Ludwig* includes, at best, current and past statuses, not all possible statuses.

Suzuki discloses that "[t]he user of the workflow management system uses a process definition tool 141 to define possible states taken by process instances." *Suzuki*, para. 0060. *Suzuki* further discloses various tables. *Suzuki*, Figs. 2, 4-10, 16-18. However, none of the tables in *Suzuki* stores the possible states.

For at least these reasons, *Ludwig* and *Suzuki* fail to teach or suggest "a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the

invoice[,] . . . an instructions table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states of the invoice[,] . . . an event table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states of the invoice [,] . . . and . . . a proposal table comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states of the invoice," as recited in claim 1.

D.   Prior Art Fails to Teach or Suggest the State Data Field Including Four Links to Four Tables

Independent claim 1 recites a computer readable storage medium for storing an electronic data record of an invoice comprising, for example, "a state data field . . . including . . . an identification of a current state[,] . . . a first link to a description table[,] . . . a second link to an instructions table[,] . . . a third link to an event table[,] . . . and a fourth link to a proposal table." As claimed, the state data field includes, in addition to the identification of the current state, four links to four tables each comprising the identifications of the plurality of possible states.

Ludwig discloses that "[t]he system may link the status field to the invoice history page." *Ludwig*, para. 0092. *Suzuki* discloses various tables. *Suzuki*, Figs. 2, 4-10, 16-18. However, *Ludwig* discloses a link to a history page, not a link to table. Furthermore, in the Final Office Action, the Examiner points out only one link in *Ludwig*, even though claim 1 recites four distinct links to four distinct tables. Moreover, *Ludwig* and *Suzuki* fails to teach or suggest any table comprising possible states. Therefore, the combination of *Ludwig* and *Suzuki* fails to teach or suggest that the status field includes four links to four corresponding tables comprising possible states. Accordingly, *Ludwig* and *Suzuki* fail to teach or suggest "a state data field . . . including . . . an

identification of a current state[,] . . . a first link to a description table[,] . . . a second link to an instructions table[,] . . . a third link to an event table[,] . . . and a fourth link to a proposal table," as recited in claim 1.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the scope and content of the prior art have not been properly determined, and the differences between the prior art and claim 1 have not been properly ascertained. Moreover, the Examiner has not identified any factors that would motivate one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of the prior art to achieve the claimed combination. Accordingly, no reason has been clearly articulated as to why the prior art would have rendered claim 1 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Therefore, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established with respect to claim 1.

Independent claims 8, 14, and 20, although different in scope from claim 1, are allowable for at least similar reasons as claim 1. Dependent claims 6, 10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 are allowable at least due to their dependence from an allowable independent claim. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

For the reasons given above, claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 are allowable and reversal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.
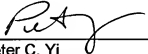
Conclusion

Please grant any extension of time required to enter this Appeal Brief and charge

any additional required fees to Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: February 25, 2010   By:_____

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VIII. **Claims Appendix**

1.   A computer readable storage medium for storing an electronic data record of an

invoice, the electronic data record comprising:

a state data field corresponding to the invoice, the state data field

including:

an identification of a current state of a processing of

the invoice, the current state being assigned by

a user through a dialogue displayed on a

display device;

a first link to a description table comprising

identifications of a plurality of possible states of

the invoice during the processing of the invoice

and corresponding descriptions of the plurality

of possible states;

a second link to an instruction table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding instructions automatically

executed by a computer, the instructions

comprising a workflow automatically initiated

by the computer;

a third link to an event table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding events which can occur

during the processing of the invoice; and

a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding proposed actions for

changing the corresponding states; and

a comment data field corresponding to the invoice, the comment data field

comprising comments entered by the user through the dialogue.

6.   The computer readable storage medium for storing the electronic data record of claim 1, wherein the electronic data record is at least partially accessible via the Internet and wherein the state data field or the comment data field is editable via the Internet.

8.   A computer-implemented method for processing an electronic data record of an invoice, the method comprising:

displaying a dialogue on a display device for enabling a user to assign a

current state of a processing of the invoice;

storing, using a processor, an identification of the current state of the

invoice in a state data field corresponding to the invoice in the

electronic data record, the state data field includes:

a first link to a description table comprising

identifications of a plurality of possible states of

the invoice during the processing of the invoice

and corresponding descriptions of the plurality

of possible states;

a second link to an instruction table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding instructions automatically

executed by a computer, the instructions

comprising a workflow automatically initiated

by the computer;

a third link to an event table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding events which can occur

during the processing of the invoice; and

a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding proposed actions for

changing the corresponding states; and

storing comments entered by the user through the dialogue in a comment

data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record.

10.   The method of claim 8, further comprising:

    performing at least one of selecting, sorting, evaluating, and analyzing the

    invoice according to the current state.

12.   The method of claim 8, wherein the current state is selectable by the user

    according to predefinable events.

13.   The method of claim 8, wherein the method is for use in business software or

    enterprise resource planning software.

14.   A computer system for processing an electronic data record of an invoice, the

    computer system comprising:

    memory including program instructions;

    input means for entering data;

    storage means for storing data;

    a processor responsive to the program instructions for displaying a

        dialogue for enabling a user to assign a current state of a

        processing of the invoice;

    program instructions for storing an identification of the current state of the

        invoice in a state data field corresponding to the invoice in the

        electronic data record, the state data field includes:

a first link to a description table comprising

identifications of a plurality of possible states of

the invoice during the processing of the invoice

and corresponding descriptions of the plurality

of possible states;

a second link to an instructions table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding instructions automatically

executed by the computer system, the

instructions comprising a workflow

automatically initiated by the computer system;

a third link to an event table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding events which can occur

during the processing of the invoice; and

a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding proposed actions for

changing the corresponding states; and

program instructions for storing comments entered by the user through the

dialogue in a comment data field corresponding to the invoice in the

electronic data record.

16. The computer system of claim 14, further comprising program instructions for performing at least one of selecting, sorting, evaluating, and analyzing the invoice according to the current state.

18. The computer system of claim 14, wherein the current state is selectable by the user according to predefinable events.

19. The computer system of claim 14, wherein the computer system is for use with business software or enterprise resource planning software.

20. A computer-readable storage medium comprising instructions for processing an electronic data record of an invoice, the computer-readable storage medium comprising instructions for:

    displaying a dialogue on a display device for enabling a user to assign a current state of a processing of the invoice;

    storing, using a processor, an identification of the current state of the invoice in a state data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record, the state data field including:

        a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of possible states of the invoice during the processing of the invoice

and corresponding descriptions of the plurality

of possible states;

a second link to an instruction table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding instructions automatically

executed by a computer, the instructions

comprising a workflow automatically initiated

by the computer;

a third link to an event table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding events which can occur

during the processing of the invoice; and

a fourth link to a proposal table comprising the

identifications of the plurality of possible states

and corresponding proposed actions for

changing the corresponding states; and

storing comments entered by the user through the dialogue in a comment

data field corresponding to the invoice in the electronic data record.

22. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 20, further comprising

instructions for:

performing at least one of selecting, sorting, evaluating, and analyzing the invoice according to the current state.

24.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 24, wherein the current state is selectable by the user according to predefinable events.

25.   The computer-readable storage medium of claim 20, wherein the computer-readable medium comprises enterprise resource planning software.

28.   An electronic data structure for an electronic data record according to any one of claims 1 and 6.

29.   An electronic data structure according to claim 28, wherein the electronic data structure is for use with enterprise resource planning software.

IX. Evidence Appendix

None.

X.   **Related Proceedings Appendix**

None.